

not our friend, and it is high time our actions started reflecting that.

Back home, of course, the Biden administration has proven it knows perfectly well how to crack down on energy pipeline projects when it wants to. In fact, on the day he left for Europe, the firm behind the Keystone XL Pipeline project announced that the President's revocation of its construction permit would be fatal. That is the end of it. What a striking image. The President of the United States heads overseas and meets with a major adversary whom he has handed a major geopolitical win, and here at home, the last nail goes in the coffin of the job-killing crusade against reliable North American energy that he said on day one was a priority.

It is a tale of two pipelines: the decisive rejection of thousands of American jobs here at home and the empowerment of America's adversaries abroad. And it is only the latest sign that the Biden administration's strategic priorities are simply out of order.

Recall, this administration rushed to rejoin a climate agreement that has failed to hold major signatories to their commitments on reducing emissions, even as the United States recorded multiple years of reductions on our own.

This administration made it harder to cap our abundant and domestic energy, even at the risk of greater reliance on imports from countries with lower environmental standards. And, of course, they proposed to squander years of accumulating economic pressure on Iran in exchange for no meaningful concessions on its nuclear ambitions or regional aggression.

So when President Biden elected to pass on another opportunity to check the influence of a major adversary, we had heard this story before.

Here in Congress, opposition to the completion of the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline has been vigorous and bipartisan. Last year's Defense authorization, which earned 84 votes here in the Senate, expanded the scope of sanctions against critical entities involved in its construction. We are talking about a project that would give Putin a new artery of influence in Western Europe and rob Ukraine of critical leverage over the way Russian energy currently flows throughout the region.

But, apparently, the Biden administration's own opposition to the project was just rhetorical. When the chips were down, the President used a waiver to avoid having to place sanctions on the biggest company behind the project and its CEO—a Putin crony. According to reports, his decision even overruled the objections of senior diplomats and the concerns of his very own Secretary of State.

Oddly enough, the administration's decision to snuff out union jobs in the energy sector here at home didn't seem to prompt as vigorous an internal debate. In fact, President Biden's Executive action to kill the Keystone XL has

been followed by a steady stream of radical proposals that illustrate just how deep his administration is in thrall to the environmental fringe.

Under the guise of infrastructure, they pitched trillions of dollars in Federal spending, aligned so closely with most liberal interests in Congress that the authors—the authors—of the Green New Deal boasted President Biden's agenda had their manifesto's DNA all over it: unprecedented spending on electric vehicles, huge increases in funds for transit projects that disproportionately benefit blue States on the coast, and plans to pick winners and losers in the market for affordable, reliable American energy.

So American workers know what a thriving energy sector looks like. It is exactly what Republicans spent 4 years working to encourage here at home.

As a matter of fact, if you hit pause on Washington Democrats' radical climate rhetoric, you will notice that smart energy policy isn't limited by political stripe. For years, the liberal government up in Canada has recognized pipelines as a safe and efficient way to connect people with affordable, reliable energy and grow what is already the largest sector of United States-Canada trade. So it was hardly surprising to hear one Canadian official greet President Biden's decision to sink the Keystone XL Pipeline as "an insult"—an insult—or to read that the Canadian firm behind the project is now pursuing legal action to recoup its investment.

So capitulation to our rivals, painful blows to our neighbors, legitimizing corrupt foreign leaders, and jamming hard-working Americans—whatever his motives, and despite his own rhetoric, the consequences of President Biden's actions are already clear.

It is not too late to impose real costs on Russia's pipeline windfall and provide serious, lethal support to Ukraine and other vulnerable States on the frontlines of Putin's aggression. It is not too late to get serious about the defense investment that bipartisan assessments say that we need—that we need—in order to compete with China and Russia. It is not too late to recommit to bipartisanship on infrastructure and on energy and show radical climate activists the door.

I hope the Biden administration changes courses sometime soon.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, what is the weather like in Las Vegas? What is it like in Reno? I am not sure, but I will bet it is hot. And the reason I am sure that it is likely to be hot is the weather forecast.

I looked at that map, and it was solid red in the western half of the United States, with extreme high temperatures at a level never recorded. They said in the city of Seattle, there have

only been a handful of times that they have had temperatures over 100 degrees in that city. It is going to happen again this weekend, at least that is the prediction. That is the weather forecast.

It is not just confined to the blue coastal States, as some call them. We have a drought in the Midwest. I hope it ends soon, but when it comes to corn country—Iowa, Illinois, Indiana—we are worried. I hope it doesn't happen, but it could, and we know it can happen soon. And then in the southeastern part of the United States, there are extreme storms—rains they haven't seen before.

I just say that after listening to the Republican leader describe the situation with the environment, wondering if he reads the papers or talks to people back home because extreme weather is happening all over the United States, and it isn't just in Republican areas or Democratic areas; it is virtually everywhere.

So when President Biden comes in and says: Shouldn't we do something about this for the good of our children and our grandchildren? Shouldn't we be willing to sacrifice a little bit? Shouldn't we be willing to change some if it means that they are going to have a planet that is worth living on—about 10 years ago, I started asking my farmers who come and visit me from Illinois a couple of questions. These are good people. They never vote for me, I know that, but I still like meeting with them. They are good people. They bring their wives. They dress up in their suits. They take it seriously. They are coming to Washington. This is before COVID-19, of course. And they would sit upstairs in my conference room. There would be about 20 or 30 of them from organizations like the Farm Bureau or the corn growers or the soybean growers. And I would say to them—this is 10 years ago—how many of you believe that what we are doing on Earth is changing the environment of the Earth we live on? I mean that our human activity is having something to do with it. And I would ask for a show of hands. And the response was, not one hand would go up.

And I finally said to them: Well, things are changing. What do you think is behind all of it? And one fellow said—and he did this seriously, and I believe he was speaking from the heart—he said: "Senator, some years God sends me a drought; some years God sends me a flood; I got to deal with whatever God sends me."

I respect him for that. That is his deep-hearted belief, and it is sincere.

But I think there is more to the story. And now when I ask these same farmers the same question, I get a different response. The Illinois corn growers, looking around, thinking something is happening here in this wonderful, bountiful State that I live in. The crops that are grown traditionally are not producing what they did traditionally, unless some hybrid seeds and other fertilizers are being used. There

are new weather conditions and it is changing every year and it is not getting better. It is getting dryer and hotter.

So when Joe Biden starts talking about the next generation of energy in America, I think about my granddaughter, "Little Jo." I think about Jo, and I am wondering what kind of world she is going to live in and what I am going to do about it.

One thing that President Biden said was, we are moving toward electric vehicles. You would think that it was some Federal mandate that is bringing this on. But if you read the newspapers, you know it isn't. General Motors has accelerated the timetable to go to electric vehicles, Ford as well. They see the writing on the wall.

What we currently use for transportation will not be what we use in 10 or 15 years. It is going to change. We are going to move to electric vehicles for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is there are fewer emissions, greenhouse gas emissions.

The country of Norway just announced last week that over 50 percent of their vehicles are electric vehicles. If you had been there in the recent past, you see Teslas in every direction, electric vehicles in every direction.

I spoke to the Ambassador from Norway, and I said: How did that happen? How did you move to a point where more than half the vehicles in Norway are electric vehicles?

She said: Tax breaks. We gave them tax breaks. And all of a sudden, everyone had a new lifestyle with electric vehicles. And they think that protects them in the future or at least holds the possibility of reducing the pollution that they are dealing with, and I think they are right. So does Joe Biden. But when we get into an infrastructure debate with Republicans, the first thing they say is: Take electric vehicles off the table. We don't want to even talk about it. No subsidies, no encouragement for those.

Traditionally, we have been encouraging oil companies, with all sorts of tax breaks throughout their history, to continue to explore and grow in size and make a lot of money. But the notion of encouraging electric vehicles is somehow heretical to our friends on the Republican side. I think it is very shortsighted.

I think we should look at the obvious. I tell this story, and it is worth repeating. Six years ago, we had an auto plant in Normal, IL—yes, that is the name of it: Normal, IL. Six years ago, Mitsubishi closed their auto plant. There were more than 1,000 people working there, and there was that big sprawling complex just off of Interstate 55. Every time you took that interstate and looked out there, you thought: That is going to be there forever. That building is just going to deteriorate and be there forever.

Well, guess what. A year after they closed, the mayor of Normal, IL, whose name is Chris Koos—a wonderful

mayor—called me and said: Senator, I think I have a buyer for the Mitsubishi plant.

I said: What kind of buyer?

He said: There is a man who wants to build electric vehicles. He came down and took a look, and he liked that plant. He said it was way too big for his purposes, but he is actually thinking of building electric vehicles in the old Mitsubishi plant.

Darned if it didn't happen. The company is called Rivian. They bought that plant, and they started building electric vehicles—just this month, officially, in production.

How many workers will they have? Up to 4,000, maybe even 5,000. Will they be able to use the whole plant? They are now building an addition to the plant. Is it a viable company? Is it going to last? Well, obviously Amazon thinks so because they have invested a billion dollars in Rivian. And the companies are coming from all around thinking this is the future.

So I say to the Senator from Kentucky, yes, there will be transitions in jobs, but there are job opportunities at Rivian and places just like that. Lion Electric is another company. It came in from Canada. They build electric buses. One of the things we are envisioning is moving toward electric schoolbuses across America. That is a big move. This is a company that builds them.

We need more just like it, and there are going to be good-paying jobs associated with it.

EVBox is a company out of the Netherlands, located in my State again. They build the charging stations.

Closing your eyes to the opportunities here is very shortsighted. Things are changing, and changing for the better. And because there is change, it doesn't mean it is bad for everybody. There are transitions, and we ought to help with educating people, preparing them for the new jobs.

But if you look around at this world and what is happening with the weather patterns and the environment, how shortsighted it would be for us to say to our kids and grandkids: Well, we had a chance back in 2021 to do something about it, but we decided it just might make people uneasy to think about that much change.

Well, I feel uneasy about the change that is coming if we do nothing. It is going to be a dramatic change for the worse for our kids.

VLADIMIR PUTIN

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, on another topic, this notion that Joe Biden is being pushed around by Vladimir Putin—the Senator who made that statement on the floor, or one just like it, has he ignored what happened over the last 4 years?

Every time the President of the United States, Donald Trump, would meet with Vladimir Putin, they would ask the translators to leave the room,

the people from the intelligence agencies to leave the room, and they would just play pat-a-cake. I mean, we know what was going on there. There was some sort of political bromance between the President and Vladimir Putin.

I don't believe that is ever going to happen with Joe Biden. He is a realist. He made it clear that he went in that meeting with Putin to lay down the law in terms of infiltrating our elections in the future and the activities that we have seen in hacking and cyber crimes.

That is the kind of leadership we need in dealing with Vladimir Putin.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today I want to speak about two really highly qualified judicial nominees the Senate Judiciary Committee came up with through the White House.

The first is Candace Jackson-Akiwumi, who has been nominated to an Illinois seat on the Seventh Circuit. With her qualifications, temperament, and range of experience, she is outstanding.

She is the daughter of two judges. Her father, Raymond Jackson, is a Federal district court judge, and her mother, Gwendolyn Jones Jackson, is a retired State court judge.

She went to Princeton and then Yale Law School—not bad. She clerked for Judge David Coar on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District and for Roger Gregory on the Fourth Circuit.

After her clerkships, she worked in private practice, and then she made an interesting career decision, and not many people make it. She decided to stop practicing in the private practice of law and become a staff attorney at the Federal Defender Program for the Northern District of Illinois, representing people who couldn't afford counsel.

Ms. Jackson-Akiwumi spent 10 years as a Federal public defender. She defended hundreds of indigent clients at every stage of the legal process. She is a real lawyer. She knows that courtroom inside and out, and she knows the legal process as well.

Ms. Jackson-Akiwumi's experience and perspective on the criminal justice system will be an asset in the Seventh Circuit. If she is approved, she will be the second woman of color to be in that circuit. It is about time.

Her skills and legal expertise will be invaluable. She received a "well qualified" rating by the ABA.

She has a great temperament. One of our Senators on the Judiciary Committee tried to trap her with a question, seeing just whether she knew enough about the law. When it was all over, I think he was satisfied that she did.

She spoke to the fact that her mother taught her how important it is for judges to listen and for litigants to be heard. This is a fundamental principle